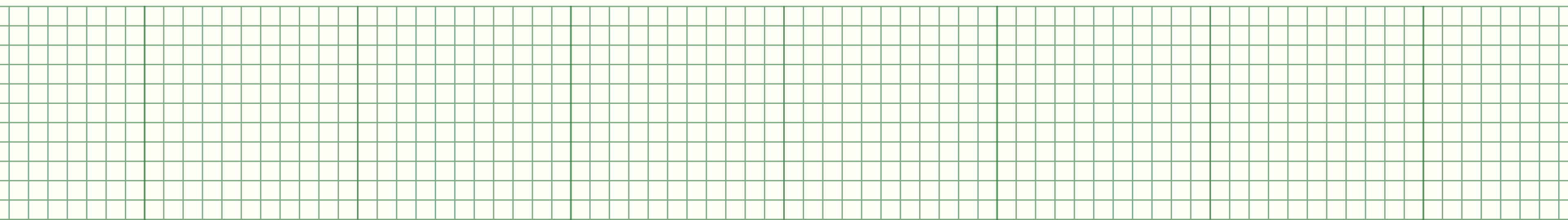# QR CODE

BY CORDELIA SHAN

WHAT IS QR CODE?

A QR Code (Quick Response Code) is a two-dimensional barcode that stores information in a grid of black and white squares.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Gather: the QR code encodes data (e.g., URL, text, or payment information).

Store: the data is stored in the pattern of squares.

Process: A scanner reads the pattern.

Use: the scanner decodes the data and performs and action.

Distribute: the result is displayed or used by the user.

THE STORY OF ITS INVENTION

The QR code was invented in **1994** by a Japanese engineer, **Masahiro Hara** (原 昌宏) and his team at Denso Corporation (株式会社デンソー), a Japanese global automotive components manufacturer company, which was founded as Nippon Denso Co. Ltd. (日本電装株式会社).

THE STORY OF ITS INVENTION

LET'S TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE QR CODE. WHAT DOES IT REMIND YOU OF?

THE STORY OF ITS INVENTION

The inspiration came from the ancient Chinese board game Weiqi (also known as Go) during a lunchbreak one day almost a quarter of a century ago.
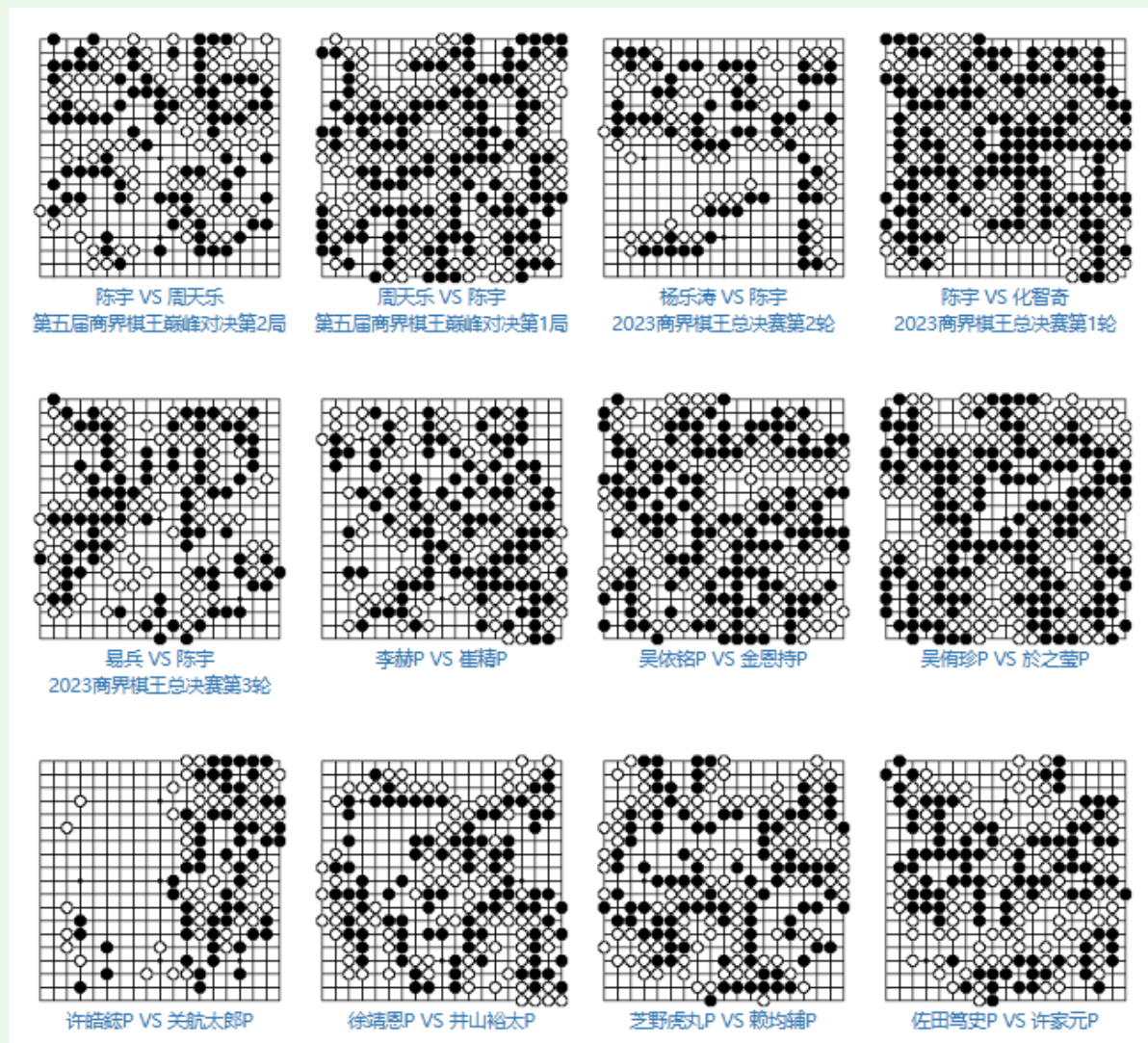
✳ Wei Qi 围棋 碁 いご GO 바둑 ✳

Weiqi (围棋) is a strategic board game where players place black and white stones on a grid to capture territory. It's deeply rooted in Chinese culture and philosophy (Tao), ancient astronomy, emphasizing balance (yin-yang), strategy, calculation, and foresight.

The game was invented in China more than 2,500 years ago and is believed to be the oldest board game continuously played to the present day.

❇ **Wei Qi 围棋 碁 いご GO 바둑** ❇

Qipu

In Weiqi, players record their movies in a Qipu (the game record). This systematic recoding of moves mirrors how QR codes store and retrieve the story and the data. Hara-san saw this as a form of "coding" and applied tit to create the QR Code.

HOW THE WEST POPULARIZED QR CODES

QR codes were initially used in Japan for industrial purposes, but their global breakthrough came much later. The turning point was in **2017**, when:

- **Apple integrated QR code scanning into the iPhone camera with iOS 11.**

- **Google did the same with Android 8.0.**

HOW THE WEST POPULARIZED QR CODES

But, why?
This made QR codes accessible to
millions of smartphone users overnight.

But why did they suddenly become so
popular? Why even Apple adopted it?

Money

WeChat & WeChat Pay

微信支付
WeChat Pay

WeChat & WeChat Pay

The real driver behind QR code adoption was China, specifically the app WeChat Pay. Since 2016, WeChat is using QR code almost for everything.

Here's why:
- **Massive User Base:** WeChat has over **1.2 billion users**, many of whom use QR codes for payments.
- **Economic Impact:** In 2020, WeChat Pay processed over **1.6 trillion USD** in transactions.
- **Cultural Shift:** QR codes became a way of life in China, used for everything from payments to bike rentals - one app for all.
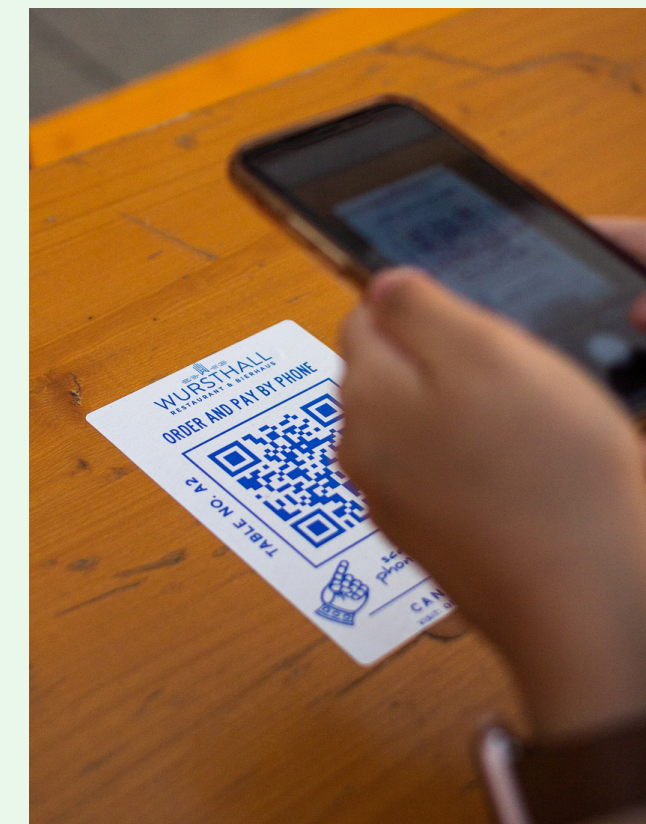
The West saw this success and realized the potential of QR codes, leading to their widespread adoption.

Then, 2020....

COVID-19: The West Adopts QR Codes

During the pandemic, QR codes became essential for contactless interactions:
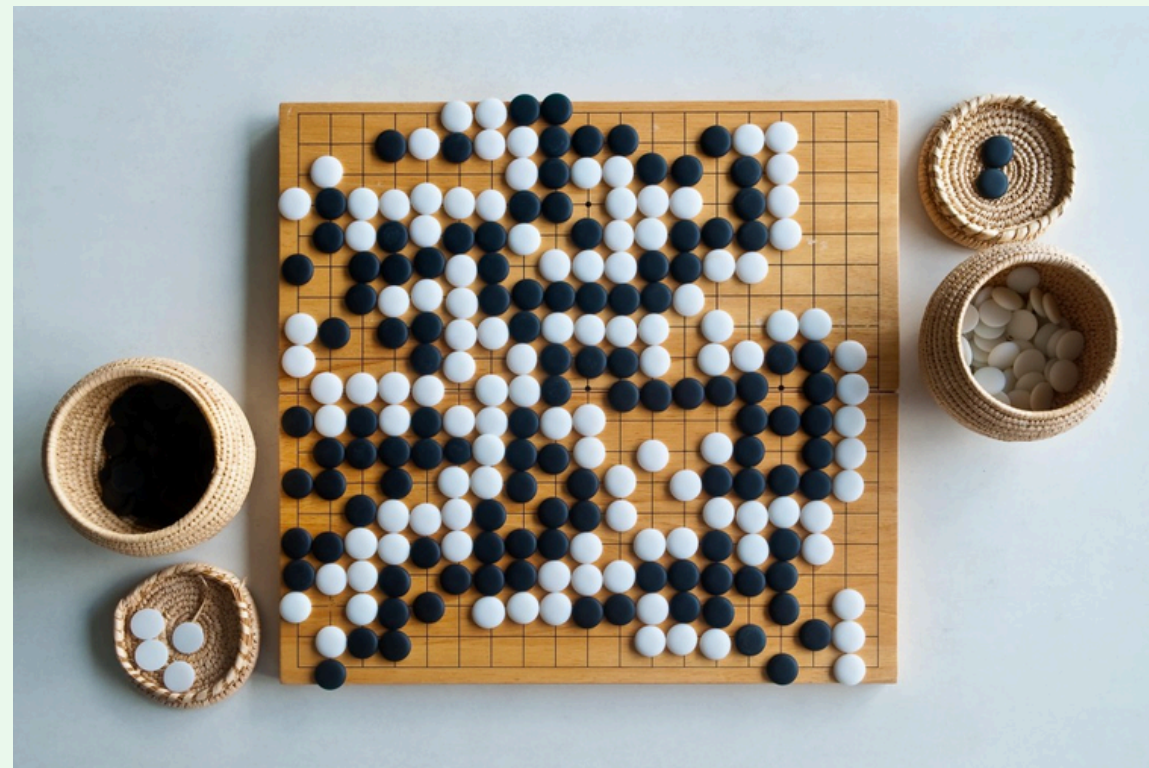- **Menus**: Restaurants used QR codes to replace physical menus.
- **Vaccine Passports**: Governments adopted QR codes for vaccine verification.
- **Check-Ins**: Businesses used QR codes for contact tracing.

Conclusion

QR codes are a perfect example of how technology, culture, and history intersect. From their inspiration in Weiqi to their global adoption during COVID-19, they've transformed the way we interact with the world. Yet, their story also raises questions about innovation, credit, and cultural exchange

Take Home Activities ✳

1. *Get a WeChat app and play with it to see how its use of QR codes influence the way of living.*